

Catering and Hospitality

Increasing student footfall

With the evolution in customers, comes the evolution of technology. As explained by the Fretwell-Downing Hospitality team, adapting your systems to changing eating habits is a must if your catering facilities are to increase both sales and revenue



Over the last 25 years, Fretwell-Downing Hospitality have supported university caterers to help deliver efficient hospitality services. During this time we have seen the range of services offered by catering facilities evolve significantly. Now the average customer portfolio extends from students and staff, through to commercial clients attending campus during conferences and events, or even as a 'hotel' guest. In the wider context, universities have also had to adapt to influences on a global scale, including; increased accessibility, not only in the UK but from overseas students too; the exponential increase in technology; economic uncertainty; changes in financial planning, and increasing stu-

dent fees which, from initial reports, has led to a drop in applications.

As university catering services have radically changed over the last 25 years, so has the use of technology. Long gone are the days when technology within a university catering operation was just a till-linked stock management system. However, against this dynamic backdrop, hospitality teams have responded with variety and a commercial understanding historically unprecedented in the sector – today reaching equal standing with some of the country's leading retail organisations.

Today's learning environment pro-

Using Saffron can help you manage every aspect of your catering facilities





Saffron Xpress enables customers to build their own food orders quickly

vides unparalleled availability to tap into knowledge. The life of the independent learner means that some students spend as little as five hours per week on campus. In direct response to this reduced presence on campus, caterers must capture available custom through whatever methods entice the student pound. An example of this is the provision of Saffron Xpress, where this quick service ordering solution is extremely effective at helping improve speed of service and customer convenience, as well as driving sales with a range of payment methods including EPOS link, account, cashless and payment cards.

Saffron Xpress enables customers to simply build their food order by navigating their way through an easy-to-follow graphical listing of the menu with voice prompts. Once they've completed their order, customers receive a printed receipt with a unique order number, while the details are also automatically transferred to the kitchen area for the order to be prepared.

The University of Kent installed two Saffron Xpress kiosks in the made-to-order sandwich bar, and introduced ordering via the website. Within the first 12 months of operat-

ing Saffron Xpress, the 'Bag-It' sandwich bar had seen the average spend per head rocket from an average of £2.13 to £4.72.

Catering Operations Manager, Keith Williams, explains: "The new counter and installation of Saffron Xpress has made busy periods much more manageable, particularly with the pre-order option that means we can produce sandwiches in off-peak times. This in-turn has increased our productivity, as less time is now spent taking orders. In addition the technology has allowed us to successfully up-sell as customers can be tempted with numerous additional items, from cold drinks to confectionery."

When used as a web service, Saffron Xpress extends the service reach beyond traditional 'boundaries'. For example, a client recently noticed that an unusual number of mopeds were arriving during the late afternoon/early evening. Further investigation identified that these were deliveries from local fast-food outlets. Accessible from either a Smartphone or Internet-connected PC, the flexible online configuration of Saffron Xpress enables an 'in-house' takeaway menu to be configured with options for delivery or collection from nominated locations at specific times.

Beyond the physical services, Saffron also provides an important management solution that ensures the hospitality team are able to make informed management decisions. The menu modelling functionality enables food offerings to be continually revised in line with actual trading data. Recognising the scope of service outlets across most modern campuses, Saffron delivers information in a wide range of formats ranging from individual item performance, through to sales location and trading period, to maximise profitability.

The benefits also extend to the provision of supporting data, such as nutritional information like traffic lights, calories, Five-A-Day and Guideline Daily Analysis. Additionally, user-defined information can enhance and/or guide sales on aspects such as assurance schemes, provenance and food origin.

Like the original, Saffron is a little spice that makes a big difference. ●

For more information about Fretwell Downing and Saffron Xpress, visit www.fdhospitality.com

Healthy Menus, Happy Customers, Fit Business.



Saffron is a software solution that helps catering businesses maximise potential to achieve greater efficiency and profitability.

As well as menu planning and costing, Saffron analyses recipes and menus presenting the results in a customer friendly traffic light format and benchmarks against nutritional guidelines.

For more information and an online demonstration, visit **fdhospitality.com**

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